



## News Release

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**MODERNIZED COMMUNICATION SYSTEM GOES  
LIVE TO SERVE TAXPAYERS MORE EFFICIENTLY**

WASHINGTON – The Internal Revenue Service has improved its ability to receive, route and respond to the more than 150 million taxpayer telephone calls it receives each year by merging a modernized communication system into its daily operations.

The new system is one of the first projects to deliver real business benefits through the agency's Business Systems Modernization program, a multi-year effort designed to revolutionize nearly every aspect of America's tax agency.

The IRS merged the new system into its daily customer service operations at the end of July, in time to help handle higher levels of calls on its toll-free hotlines due to the recent mailing of advance payment notices to taxpayers.

Major system improvements include:

- Voice-activated programs that recognize English or Spanish-speaking callers.
- A voice-activated program that taxpayers can use to find out the status of their refund.
- Capabilities that more accurately route taxpayer calls to the most appropriate IRS resource.

"This new system gives callers the right balance of personal customer service and automated responses," said John Reece, IRS Deputy Commissioner for Modernization and Chief Information Officer. "This phase of modernizing our telephone hotlines gives us the ability to quickly and accurately guide taxpayers to the right solution and the appropriate level of IRS service."

One aspect of the improved system uses automated voice recognition to screen, then route, callers to a customer service representative or to an automated resource. The system lets taxpayers with simple questions get answers quickly, while those with issues that are more complex are guided to a customer service representative. The voice response system starts if callers don't make a selection using their phone's key pad. Callers then hear a series of options, and they make their selections by speaking into the phone.

This modernized communication system was built and installed through the Customer Communication 2001 Project under the IRS Business Systems Modernization program. BSM is a joint effort of the IRS and a private-sector consortium.

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